



THOMAS L. GARTHWAITE, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

FRED LEAF
Chief Operating Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
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January 23, 2003

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, MD
Director and Chief Medical Officer

SUBJECT: **OCTOBER 8, 2002 MOTION RESPONSE**

At its meeting held on October 8, 2002, the Director of Health Services was instructed to "examine the feasibility of establishing a review system, utilizing appropriate medical leaders (e.g., Department Chairs and/or Medical Directors), for those highly complex procedures that are being considered for patients, some of whom have been refused the same procedure at another institution because of their risk status, not their financial status." This is in response to that motion.

Staff reviewed current procedures for identifying patients who are being considered for surgical procedures. Resource needs are identified by the operating surgeon during the pre-operative period. The Department of Health Services (DHS) determined that specific policy statements would be useful in establishing a formal process of review for those patients who are undergoing a highly complex procedure.

The following two policy statements have been approved and will be implemented as policy throughout DHS.

1. Prior to the performance of an elective highly complex surgical procedure in a high risk patient who has been refused care at another institution for reasons of risk rather than financial status, the operating surgeon shall present the case to the appropriate peers, including the Department Chair, for the purpose of planning to ensure the adequacy of resources for the procedure and for the immediate post-operative period. A recording of this planning meeting shall be maintained by the Department Chair.

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2. It is the attending surgeon's responsibility to make plans, through peers and/or Department Chairs, for the management of the patient should he or she not be available during the first forty-eight (48) hours post-operatively, to ensure appropriate coverage by a qualified and appropriately credentialed back up attending physician.

Should you have any questions, please let me know.

TLG:ls

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January 31, 2003 (6:17AM)

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors